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**AUG 6 2001**

In re Patent No. 5,587,981 :  
Issue Date: December 24, 1996 : ON PETITION  
Application No. 08/523,461 : **OFFICE OF PETITIONS**  
Filed: September 5, 1995 : **A/C PATENTS**

This is a decision on the petition under 37 C.F.R. § 1.378(c), filed July 30, 2001, to accept the unintentionally delayed payment of the maintenance fee for the above-identified patent.

The petition is **GRANTED**.

The patent issued December 24, 1996. The grace period for paying the 3.5 year maintenance fee expired at midnight on December 24, 2000. Therefore, since this petition was filed within twenty-four months after the six month grace period provided in 37 C.F.R. § 1.362(e), this petition was timely filed under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.378(c).

Accordingly, the maintenance fee in this case is accepted and the above-identified patent is hereby reinstated as of the mail date of this decision.

There is no indication that petitioner herein was ever empowered to represent the instant patent. If petitioner desires to receive future correspondence regarding this patent, the appropriate power of attorney and change of correspondence address documentation must be submitted to the Office. A courtesy copy of this decision will be mailed to petitioner. **However, petitioner is advised that all future correspondence regarding this patent will be directed to the address currently of record until such time as appropriate instructions are received to the contrary.**

It is not apparent whether the person signing the statement of unintentional delay was in a position to have firsthand or direct knowledge of the facts and circumstances of the delay at issue. Nevertheless, such statement is being treated as having been made as the result of a reasonable inquiry into the facts and circumstances of such delay. In the event that such an inquiry has not been made, petitioner must make such an inquiry. If such inquiry results in the discovery that the delay in paying the maintenance fee under 37 C.F.R. § 1.378(c) was intentional, petitioner must notify the Office.

This file is being forwarded to Files Repository.

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned at 703-305-0310.

*Alesia M. Brown*

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